



Update on a Commission study on invertebrate biological control agents

ABIM Conference
19/20 October 2021
Basel, CH

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Portuguese initiative in IBCAs

- Scope: control of plant (quarantine) pests
- Initiative taken during the Portuguese Council Presidency, I/2021
- Information was gathered from MS through a questionnaire and from MS and stakeholders during a workshop in April 2021
- Request under Art. 241 TFEU from Council to the Commission to submit a study; deadline: 31 December 2022

Council Decision (EU) 2021/1102

- Subject: invertebrate biological control agents (IBCA)s
 - > included: male sterile insects
 - > not included: pollinators and other invertebrates which are not used in control of plant pests
- Frame: Union's situation and options regarding
 - introduction
 - evaluation
 - production
 - marketing and use
 - while ensuring the safety of humans, animals, plants, the environment and food security
- Options may include:
 - further harmonisation (of criteria, procedures and decision-making),
 - research
 - innovation and knowledge dissemination programmes
 - reinforced cooperation with international organisations
 - supporting investment, innovation and safe use

The Council's analysis

- Contribution towards the objectives of the Farm to Fork Strategy and Green Deal and means to diminish dependence from chemical pesticides
- Growing importance of IBCAs in sustainable agriculture and forestry
- In future, IBCAs may play a bigger role in controlling threats from alien pests for agriculture and forestry in the EU

- Wide diversity of approaches between MS regarding release, evaluation and movement of IBCAs exist
- International standards and guidance are available; more consistency in the approaches of MS is expected to create some benefits

- Trans-border migration of IBCAs remains a concern
- The role of an innovative industry is recognised; however, quality control is essential for safety and performance of IBCAs



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Appreciation by the Commission

- The Commission welcomes the request which fits well into the Commission initiatives towards a more sustainable and resilient food system
- IBCAs may help to achieve the pesticide reduction goals in the Farm to Fork and the Biodiversity Strategy
- Growing global mobility or climate change are just two examples of drivers behind the increasing risk of introduction and outbreaks of new pests as well as expansion of existing pests in the EU
- Thorough stock-taking is crucial

Challenges

- No universal definition of biological control or concept of use of IBCAs laid down in the request (e.g.: what about augmentative use?)
- We may expect a broad range of existing regulatory systems across the EU
- Need for solid data to allow establishing a baseline and defining options
- The study shall describe the status quo and identify possible options; it cannot replace an impact assessment



Goalposts for the Commission

- No compromises shall be made on the high safety standards for health, food and the environment in the EU
- The analysis will have to take into account the following questions
 - Is the absence of EU legislation in this area a problem and do we need to provide for harmonisation?
 - If that is the case: what is the appropriate level of harmonisation and which elements are better done confined to the responsibility of Member States?
 - Is it most recommended to move towards harmonising definitions, criteria or procedures to be applied, keeping in mind the principle of subsidiarity?
 - Lastly, do we need a fully harmonised evaluation and approval system?